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Fair trade, fair prices

Ch'ng Poh Tiong on good wines that fulfil social responsibility



The product most associated with "fair trade" is coffee. The concept of trading fairly with coffee was established very early on because of the huge economic disparity between the farmers who grew the crop and the retailers who brew the drink.

The producers who toiled away growing, tending to and harvesting coffee beans were paid very little for their produce. As a result, enlightened and fair-minded consumers and business people decided to do something about it, and the idea of fair trade was born.

The principal aim is to help producers in developing countries get better trading conditions from their customers in the more developed countries.

Fair trade advocates the payment of a higher price for exporters as well as practising greater social responsibility and more sustainable environmental practices.

The list of products associated with fair trade includes coffee, handicraft, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, honey, cotton, fresh fruit, chocolate, flowers and wine.

There are several organisations involved in fair trade certification, including Fairtrade International, Institute for Marketecology and Eco-Social.

This article is devoted to wines that are proudly fair trade. The producers have pledged to pay their workers fair wages. Over and beyond that, the wineries assume a social responsibility beyond just dollars, pesos or rands.

Indeed, in the case of Bodega Norton Temprano offerings from Argentina, the wines have been dedicated to the very people who work the vineyards. Deetlefs in South Africa is also exemplary in its concern for the financial well-being of its workers. Tracing its wine pedigree back to 1822, the ancestors of this family-owned/managed winery first came

out to South Africa on a ship that left Holland on Oct 3, 1752. Its proprietor, Kobus Deetlefs, said: "These projects not only create opportunities for our workers but also contribute to the future of our country."

As for Santa Digna, that is the Chilean spearhead of Spain's most famous wine producer Miguel Torres. Cultivating vines in the South American country since 1979, Santa Digna is not only fair trade but also practises organic viticulture.

Recommending fair trade wines is a most natural fit for FairPrice. After all, the company's mission is to always give consumers a fair price.

It's not, however, enough to recommend wines — or other products — merely because they follow fair trade practices. The wines have to be good in the first place.

Having tasted them, we are delighted to confirm that all these wines pass both the quality and fair trade criteria.

SANTA DIGNA SAUVIGNON BLANC RESERVA 2012

Straw/pale yellow. Guava and spring onion spicy (the white and green parts) on the nose and palate. Very refreshing. Almost full-bodied and quite viscous. Delicious on its own and with deep-fried foods such as tempura, pakoras, spring rolls, fish, prawns and crab.



SANTA DIGNA CABERNET SAUVIGNON RESERVA 2012

Firm red in colour. Blackcurrant/blueberry fruit with a whiff of mint. Ripe fruit balanced by equally smooth tannins. Freshness on the finish. Very balanced. Medium-plus-bodied. Delicious with roast chicken, pork, lamb and beef.



BODEGA NORTON TEMPRANO CHARDONNAY 2013

On the nose, peaches, pineapples and a hint of vanilla. The palate reveals tropical/vanillin fruit. Soft and round with a lift of freshness on the end. Medium-bodied. Will pair well with shellfish, fish, pork and chicken dishes.



BODEGA NORTON TEMPRANO MALBEC 2013

Cherries, plums and mocha on the nose. The palate is however more restrained than the aromas. The ripe-ish tannins are fresh. Medium-plus-bodied. Pair this with duck, lamb and beef.



BODEGA NORTON TEMPRANO CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013

Deep red in complexion. Dark cherry, chocolate and tobacco aromas. The ripe smooth fruit is balanced by equally succulent, smooth tannins. Medium-plus-bodied. Enjoyable on its own and even better with food such as roast pork, duck, lamb and beef.



DEETLEFS SHIRAZ 2011

The nose is of chocolate, red berries, blackberries and spice. The tannins are ripe, relatively smooth and have a crispness on the finish. About medium-plus-bodied. Best with food such as braised belly pork, braised duck, roast lamb and stews.



DEETLEFS CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2011

The aroma and palate profile is of blackcurrant, plum and oak spiced fruit. Tannins with a firm grip on the finish. Very fresh. Aged 12 months in French oak. Medium-plus-bodied. Best enjoyed with food such as roast chicken, roast pork, beef, steak and lamb.

